

## Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-10 OMB-01

TRSE-00 EB-07 MC-02 EURE-00 /089 W

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P R 131704Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6081

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

OSAF/I AND L WASHDC PRIORITY

ASD/YP WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OHIO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 01515

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: MASS,BE,US

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS IN BELGIAN PARLIAMENT ON F-16

REF: BRUSSELS 1393

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS ANSWERS  
QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE F-16  
NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. VANDEN BOEYNANTS WAS QUESTIONED IN REGULAR Q AND A  
SESSION IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FEB. 12 BY TALBOT AND GILLET.  
FORMER IS FLOOR LEADER OF THE RW WHICH IS MEMBER OF  
GOVERNMENT COALITION; LATTER IS MEMBER OF LIBERAL PARTY,  
WHICH WHILE NOT MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT COALITION OFTEN DOES NOT  
OPPOSE GOVERNMENT.

2. VDB'S REMARKS COVERED FOLLOWING POINTS:  
DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED ARE OF AN ECONOMIC NATURE  
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DUE TO THE UNCOMPETITIVENESS OF EUROPEAN AND BELGIAN

INDUSTRY WHEN COMPARED TO US INDUSTRY. THE PROBLEMS ARE NOT POLITICAL OR TECHNICAL IN NATURE THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATIONS GUARANTEED BY THE USG HAS NOT AND WILL NOT BE REOPENED.

DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN THE COMPANY TO COMPANY NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDERWAY BECAUSE (A) AMERICAN HOURLY LABOR COSTS ARE LOWER THAN BELGIAN; (B) INFLATION HAS BEEN BETTER CONTROLLED IN THE US THAN IN EUROPE;

(C) AMERICAN PRODUCTIVITY IS HIGHER THAN BELGIUM'S AND (D) AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY IS MORE ADVANCED THAN EUROPE'S.

THE CHOICE OF THE F-16 WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF ITS HIGH PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS AND THIS CHOICE MUST PERMIT BELGIAN INDUSTRY LARGE SCALE PARTICIPATION IN ITS PRODUCTION OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD THE CHOICE MUST ALSO PERMIT BELGIAN INDUSTRY ACCESS TO NEW TECHNOLOGY.

THE PROBLEMS OF CO- PRODUCTION ARE REAL,BUT NO ONE CAN SAY THEY WILL NOT BE RESOLVED. CO- PRODUCTION, ITSELF,HAS NOT BEEN QUESTIONED THE USG HAS RECONFIRMED ITS WILL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO LIVE UP TO ITS AGREEMENTS.

THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE VIGILANT TO SEE THAT THIS IS THE CASE AND WILL FOLLOWUP AT THE GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL IF NECESSARY.

THE FINAL CONTRACT HAS NOT YET BEEN SIGNED EITHER THE AGREEMENTS OF THE USG AND THE QUANTITY OF COMPETITION WILL O NINLIT#AS ORDER TO BELGIAN INDUSTRY OR THE CONTRACT WILL NOT BE SIGNED.

ON THE PURCHASE OF THE MAG 58 MACHINEGUN BY THE USG, THIS WAS NEVER A CONDITION POSED FOR BELGIUM'S SELECTION OF THE F-16. ON THE OTHER HAND,ON JUNE 2, 1975, SECDEF SCHLESINGER GAVE ASSURANCES THAT IF THE MAG 58 MACHINE GUN WERE BETTER THAN ITS AMERICAN COMPETITOR,WHICH SEEMS TO BE THE CASE,A LARGE ORDER TO FIN WOULD BE CONSIDERED FAVORABLY.

3. DEBATE ON THESE SUBJECTS WILL BE RESUMED IN PARLIAMENT ON FEB. 19.  
RENNER

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** MASS, BE, US, (VANDEN BOEYNANTS, PAUL)  
**To:** STATE DOD  
**Type:** TE  
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